Department of Tourism so far has identified ten rural tourism projects based on the merits of proposals during the year 2002-03. Under the scheme, a maximum amount of Rs. 50.00 lakhs is proposed for rural tourism projects based on the merits of the proposals.

(d) and (e) Department of Tourism has identified Pochampalli in Andhra Pradesh as Rural Tourism Development Project.

Wildlife and forest tourism in Gujarat

1355. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a vast scope to promote wildlife and forest tourism in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the steps taken to tap the tourist potential;

(c) whether any plan has been prepared by the State Government and submitted to Central Government for financial assistance to develop tourist infrastructure in the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Government of Gujarat informed the Central Government that in close co-operation with the State Department of Forests and Environment, the State Government have taken steps to develop wildlife and forest tourism at Gir Wild Life Sanctuary, Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Wild Ass Sanctuary in Surendranagar, Sloath Bear Sanctuary in Panchmahal and as well as to develop forest tourism in Dang.

(c) and (d) The State Government of Gujarat submitted two projects seeking Central Financial Assistance for development of tourist infrastructure in the State during the current financial year 2002-2003. The details of the Project and amount sanctioned are listed below:

Name of the Project	Amount sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)
Development of tourist infrastructure at village Odwada, Valsad Distt.	97.27
Development of Vadnagar—An ancient Heritage town of Gujarat	99.85

Development of tourist spots in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

1356. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Andaman and Nicobar having 576 islands, has a lot of tourist potential;

(b) whether Government has any proposal to develop Andaman and Nicobar as a tourist spot to attract domestic and international tourists;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken in this direction by Government?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Andaman and Nicobar consists of 572 islands inclusive of small islands, rocks and islets and it has a potential to attract domestic and international tourists.

(b) to (d) During the Tenth Five Year Plan, Department of Tourism, Government of India has decided to identify six travel circuits in the country. These circuits will be finalised and developed in close coordination and partnership with the State/UT Governments and the concerned Government of India Departments. In addition to this it is also proposed to identify one major destination in each State/UT Administration in consultation with them for overall development including the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. All the State Governments/UT Administrations including Andaman & Nicobar have been requested to submit the detailed proposals in this regard.